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WESTERN EUROPE – CANADA – INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Western Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Tension Over Basque Death Sentences Mounts
in Spain

Tension continues to mount in Spain as time runs out for the two Basque terrorists condemned to death late last month for killing a member of the Civil Guard.

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The controversy stirred by the handling of the case, which is now being reviewed by the supreme military tribunal, is likely to be intensified by the death sentence passed today against three members of a Marxist-Leninist terrorist organization--the Patriotic and Anti-Fascist Revolutionary Front--who were convicted of slaying a policeman in July.

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Few issues in Spain are as capable of mobilizing the far right and the security forces as the killing of policemen. Last month members of the Civil Guard--the elite paramilitary police force--and civilian rightist groups used the funeral of a slain guardsman as a focal point for a demonstration that nearly got out of hand. Cars carrying government officials were damaged and the demonstrators shouted criticism of the Arias government. Twice since late August, officers and men of the Civil Guard have reportedly conducted demonstrations to demand the prompt executions, not only of the two convicted Basque terrorists, but also of others as yet untried.

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The guardsmen have accused Prime Minister Arias and Interior Minister Garcia of being weak, ineffectual and cowardly. Junior

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1 | and middle-grade Civil Guard officers in one of the Basque provinces have reportedly circulated statements in which they claim they will refuse to permit their men to fulfill their duties unless the two terrorists are promptly executed.

3, 4 | The campaign to pressure Franco into commuting the death sentences also continues to gather support. A wave of demonstrations and strikes has swept the Basque provinces since the two terrorists were convicted last month. One demonstrator has been killed by police and several others wounded, but even greater violence is likely if the executions are carried out.

4 | The death sentences have prompted a flood of protests by foreign governments, trade unions and other organizations. There have also been violent reactions abroad. Spanish diplomatic and consular facilities in Portugal, as well as the Spanish consulate and Spanish-owned businesses in the French Basque country have been bombed, and there have been large demonstrations in Lisbon, Brussels, and Paris. [REDACTED] reports that the French Trotskyist organization, the Revolutionary Communist League, plans a "peaceful" seizure of the Spanish embassy in Paris, or of a Spanish consulate elsewhere in France, to dramatize their support for the Basque terrorists.

3 | Under similar circumstances in 1970, Franco commuted the death sentences handed down to six Basque terrorists. The reaction from rightist forces in Spain this time is probably an effort to counter-balance

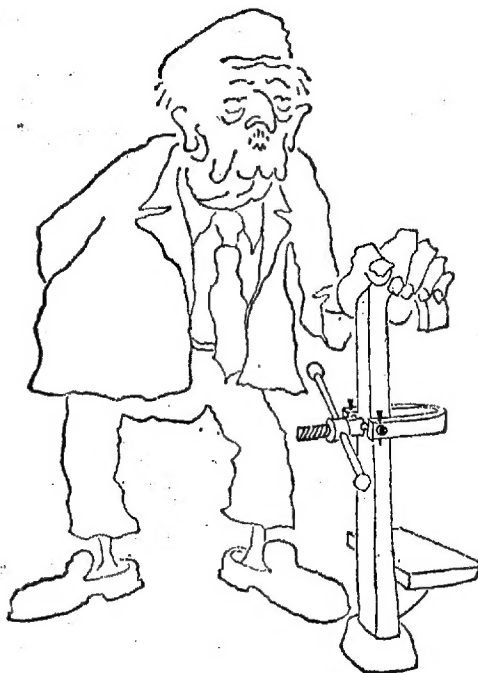
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the expected arguments by more liberal elements of the government that Spain's image will suffer serious damage abroad if the sentences are carried out. (Secret No Foreign Dissem/Controlled Dissem)

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Le Monde

(Dessin de KONK.)

Franco supports himself on a
garrote--the traditional
Spanish instrument of execution

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Austrian Socialists Appear to Have a Slight
Edge in the National Election Campaign

With only three weeks remaining before Austrian voters go to the polls to select a new parliament, there is still no good indication concerning the likely outcome on October 5.

The latest newspaper poll of 2,000 voters indicated that, of those with a preference, 48.1 percent would vote for Chancellor Kreisky's Socialist Party, 45.1 percent for the opposition People's Party, and 5.8 percent for the small Freedom Party. The remaining one percent presumably would support miniscule third parties. A full 10 percent, however, claimed not to have decided how they will vote.

Given the strong probability that a sizable number of undecided voters will eventually throw their lot with the Socialists, Chancellor Kreisky would seem to have a fair shot at retaining his absolute majority in parliament.

One factor that complicates any analysis is that the poll was taken over a wide time span. It began before the car accident that killed Karl Schleizer, Chairman of the People's Party, and concluded after the selection of this party's new leadership under Schleizer's successor, Josef Taus.

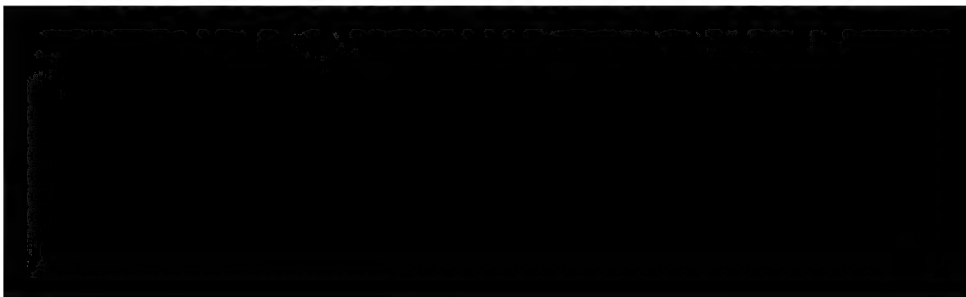
Taus, former President of the Austrian Savings Bank Holding Company, has personally benefited from a wave of public sympathy in reaction to

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Schleinzer's death because the same poll indicates that voters give him the highest "favorable" rating among all the leading Austrian political figures, including Kreisky. This may not be as significant as it appears, for Taus also ranked relatively low when the voters were asked to identify him. Taus' positive political profile is a case where voters know little--and nothing bad--about the candidate. (Unclassified)

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Greek Cypriots to Take Their Case to the UN

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The near total collapse of the intercommunal talks this week in New York has prompted the Greek Cypriots to take their case to the UN General Assembly as a means of exerting additional pressure on the Turks. The Greek Cypriots have been encouraged to take this step by the strong support they received at the recent Nonaligned Conference in Lima. President Makarios will come to the US in late September to lead the Greek Cypriot delegation.

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A full scale debate in the UN might still be averted, according to Greek Cypriot negotiator Clerides who told a US official this week that the UN debate on Cyprus would probably not take place until after the Turkish elections on October 12. This would still give the Turks time to submit proposals on the territorial question. Clerides cautioned, however, that a mere promise by the Turks to discuss territory would not suffice for the Greek Cypriot side to agree to another round of talks. The Turks instead would have to submit their proposals in advance, following which the Greek side would indicate whether another meeting would be useful. Clerides' statements apparently reflect Makarios' determination to avoid future negotiations that merely give the appearance of progress and lessen the pressure on the Turks to negotiate seriously.

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Meanwhile, the impasse in the talks may prompt the EC Nine to take the initiative to narrow differences and thereby avert an acrimonious debate in the UN that could further

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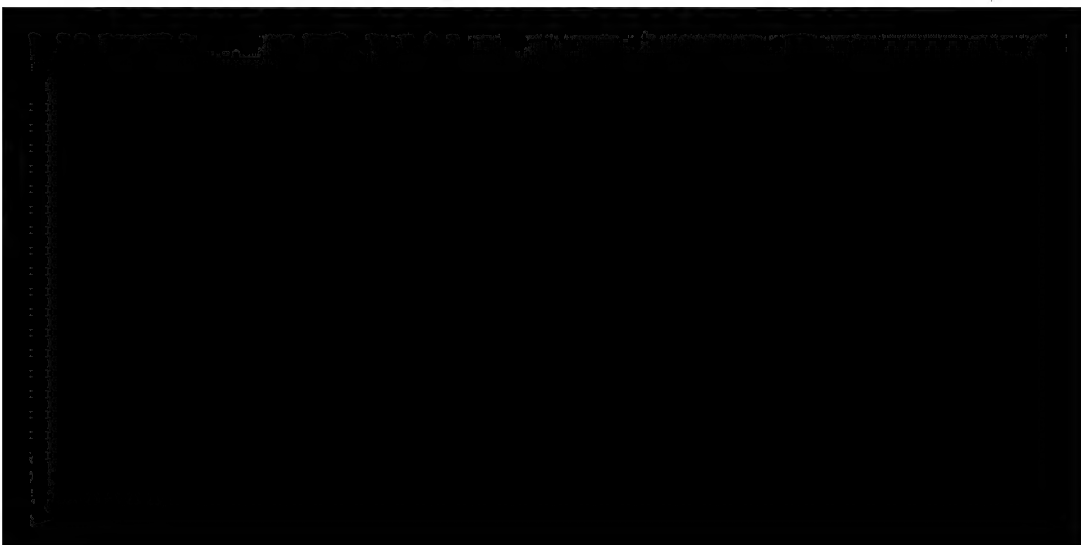
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harden the respective positions. Earlier this summer the EC Nine offered to mediate the dispute and have subsequently made demarches to the interested parties urging them to be flexible. The Nine decided to await the results of the New York talks before taking additional steps.

The Turks generally have been cool to an EC role in the Cyprus dispute but the prospect of possibly heading off consideration of the issue by the General Assembly could make them more receptive. (Confidential)

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France Moving Toward Cooperation in NATO
Arms Standardization

France has decided to participate in arms standardization talks this fall in the North Atlantic Council and in a special steering group to be set up at the Council meeting on September 17.

The steering group will be charged with developing detailed principles for cooperation in arms standardization for consideration at the December meeting of NATO foreign ministers. While French ambassador to NATO De Rose has made clear that participation in these initial discussions does not represent a prior commitment by France to support the NATO effort, he emphasized the similarity which he found in US and French views on standardization in his June discussions with secretaries Kissinger and Schlesinger. At the same time, De Rose has indicated that the degree of actual French participation in arms standardization remains uncertain and will have to be carefully negotiated.

The composition of the steering committee to be charged with directing the arms standardization effort has not been decided. The US has suggested that this group include senior representatives from all member nations and various NATO military officials. France, however, may be thinking of a more limited group of key nations to act for the Council. Moreover, the French may object to the participation of NATO military authorities in the committee because of France's determination to remain aloof from the military side of NATO.

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France, like the other European allies, is also interested in developing a European entity to carry on a dialogue with the US on such topics as greater trans-Atlantic cooperation and the armaments flow. Eurogroup--the informal caucus of the European members of NATO--is now discussing this topic but France has so far refused to take part. The Belgians are urging formation of an ad hoc group to accommodate France, but the major allies want prior assurances that the French would participate in a serious manner.

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Paris' reservations point to the continuing influence of Gaullist views in French politics. According to the Belgian ambassador to NATO, the French government may still be undecided about greater involvement in arms standardization. He believes the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and President Giscard may favor it, but that Prime Minister Chirac and important defense officials are less enthusiastic. Giscard's freedom is limited, moreover, because he relies on the Gaullists for his parliamentary majority. The Belgian--like his colleagues--see French willingness to participate in discussions in the North Atlantic Council as an important first step toward NATO arms standardization. The Europeans appear united in the view, however, that a strenuous effort conducted at the highest level is necessary to get France fully behind the arms standardization effort. (Confidential No Foreign Dissem/Background Use Only)

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